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Straight Talk About Ag

The PennAg Mission

Working to create and maintain an effective, viable, and competitive environment for Pennsylvania Agribusiness to grow and prosper. PennAg's beliefs and guiding principles on pertinent subjects (which follow) provide guidance on legislative and regulatory issues.

Animal Agriculture

Animal agriculture remains the largest component of Pennsylvania's number one industry, agriculture. The pressures placed on this important segment of agriculture are significant. Proposals for new or expended operations are constantly challenged based on emotions rather than unbiased scientific data. If this keystone of Pennsylvania agriculture is to survive, additional attention must be given to it by government and academia. PennAg supports the creation of a special appropriation to the Department of Agriculture in the amount of 3 million dollars to be used by the Department and, under contract, the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University or appropriate universities or private contractors, to address the existing concerns and develop a strategic plan to guide animal agriculture, and Pennsylvania agriculture generally, in addressing these concerns in the five year period - 2000 to 2005.

Food Quality Assurance Programs

Producers of agricultural commodities are committed to providing the highest possible quality of food for human consumption. Quality Assurance Programs, such as the Pennsylvania Egg Quality Assurance Program, provide an opportunity for government and the agricultural sector to work together toward that end. Government agencies at all levels should provide

the necessary support, financial and otherwise, to encourage and support cooperative voluntary programs. Further, PennAg supports the use of sound scientific principles in the enactment and amendment of statutes and regulations addressing the subject of food quality.

Odor Research

Accelerated research by academic institutions, in cooperation with industry, to address ways to control the odors of agriculture is essential for agriculture to survive in Pennsylvania. PennAg supports additional funding for odor research and the establishment of the highest priority for odor research using funds that are currently available.

Nutrient Management

The creation and enforcement of state-of-the-art, cost-effective, best management practices (BMP's) to prevent pollution should be supported. Further, PennAg believes that Federal and State governments must adopt those BMP's in a timely way thereby allowing industry to meet them in developing new and expanded livestock and agronomic operation. As research and experience dictate the need for change in BMP's, PennAg will support changes which, based on sound science, are justified. PennAg also recognizes that there are many other sources of nutrients in addition to agriculture. Further, that government, at all levels, must also focus on those sources so as to avoid the prospect that all nutrient reduction is accomplished on the back of an already burdened agricultural community.

Pesticide Use

Pest control in agricultural and institutional environments is very important and is essential to insure a profitable environment for agriculture. PennAg advocates continued education, testing and certification of pesticide applicators, adoption of the principles of Integrated Pest Management, and a strong regulatory presence to insure compliance with state and federal laws and provide for the safe and proper use of pesticides. Further, PennAg supports the use of sound scientific principles in the enactment or amendment of pesticide statutes and regulations. Integrated Pest Management in the institutional environment, including schools, is essential to insure a healthy and safe environment for those who work and learn there. PennAg also believes that the pace of implementation of Integrated Pest Management Programs must be accelerated. All schools should be

encouraged or required to adopt IPM Programs which meet the standards developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pesticide Advisory Board, and recognized for their efforts through increased state funding. Further, PennAg supports the use of sound scientific principles in the enactment or amendment of pesticide statutes and regulations.

Marketing and Promotion

Financial support should be increased for marketing and promotion of Pennsylvania agriculture and its products. PennAg will support an increase in the line item in the Department of Agriculture budget for marketing and promotion. Further, PennAg believes that the funding should be available for use by agricultural organizations to promote the further development and expansion of Pennsylvania agriculture.

State Conservation Commission Programs

The link between federal, state and county government in conservation programs is enhanced through the activities of the State Conservation Commission. The current structure and organizational location of the Commission is not conducive to the delivery and monitoring of programs delegated to districts by state agencies. The Commission can not rely solely on the staffs of state agencies to carry out its functions.

Grain Dealer Bonding and Licensing

An equitable program that meets the needs of both the industry and the individual farmers is necessary. A program that helps insure that farmers receive timely payments for their grain and helps insure that industry is treated likewise under any contractual arrangement will be supported by PennAg. Mandatory, Non-Binding Arbitration As long as there are buyers and sellers, disputes will sometimes arise. When disputes occur, amicable resolution is preferred. When resolution by the two parties is not possible, PennAg supports mandatory, non-binding arbitration as the next step. PennAg will support legislation that creates a realistic mechanism for mandatory, non-binding arbitration.

Seed Industry

A healthy seed industry is necessary to insure a productive and profitable Pennsylvania agriculture. Further, an efficient and well-staffed seed laboratory in the Department of Agriculture ensures that only high quality

seed is sold to Pennsylvania farmers and others. Funding for Agricultural Programs and Research The number one industry in the Commonwealth, agriculture, deserves and requires adequate funding for regulatory, information, marketing, promotion and research programs. PennAg supports increased funding for Department of Agriculture programs and increased funding for research conducted at Pennsylvania academic institutions.

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